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nification: (1) as a translation of *hiereus*; but this word is never applied to the Christian minister, nor are any of its derivatives. One derivative of a closely related word is so applied only in the highly figurative passage, Rom. 15:16; (2) as a contraction of *presbyter*, and this word is constantly used of the officers of the Christian church. *Prophet* also is applied many times to the Christian teacher. As already said, he is in New Testament usage a prophet and a presbyter, but never a priest in the sacerdotal sense of that word. Sacrifice is used frequently of acts of Christian devotion, sometimes in a plainly figurative sense, sometimes in that more general and broad sense which may be called literal, but which is founded on and derived from the figurative use.

## THE POSTEXILIC HISTORY OF ISRAEL. V.

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### THE REFORM UNDER EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

*The chronological basis.*—The events to be considered under this title extend over about twenty-five years, including the administration of Ezra and the first administration of Nehemiah. They all occurred within the forty-one years that bear the name of Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia, 464-424 B.C.

*The sources of the history.*—These are Ezra 7-10; Neh. 1-12:26;\* 1 Esdr. chaps. 8-9; Jos. *Ant.* XI:5. To these may be

\* Evidently the thirteenth chapter of Nehemiah mentions events that are much later than those of the main body of the book. The question is as to where the transition is made from the earlier events to the later. Dr. Howard Crosby, in the Schaff-Lange Commentary on Nehemiah, is probably a fair representative of current opinion when he places the transition at the close of 13:3, thus placing the dedication of the wall, 12:27-45, in the first administration of Nehemiah. But it seems that the dedication did not take place at the gathering in the seventh month, soon after the wall was completed, for it is not mentioned in the very full account we have of that gathering, Neh. 8-10. It was held at some later time, and was made a special occasion for perfecting certain arrangements for the support of the priests, Levites, and other temple attendants, 12:44, 45. This might have been some months after the completion of the wall; it is quite as likely to have been some years afterward, when experience had proved that the arrangements

added a few gleanings and inferences drawn from profane history and other sources.

*The dated events.*—458 B.C. 7th year of Artaxerxes. First day of first month, "the foundation of" Ezra's going up, Ezra 7:7-9. Twelfth day, they start from the river Ahava, 8:31. First day of fifth month, they reach Jerusalem, 7:9. Fourth day, they weigh out the silver and gold, 8:33.

Ninth month, twentieth day, the convocation in the rain, for putting away strange wives, 10:9. First day of tenth month, the court convened for trying these cases, 10:16.

457 B.C. First day of first month, the end reached, 10:17.

445 B.C. 20th year of Artaxerxes, the ninth month, Nehemiah, in Shushan, learns that the walls of Jerusalem have been broken down, and the gates burned, Neh. 1:1 sq.\*

made at the gathering of the seventh month (Neh. 10:32 seq.) were inadequate. When Nehemiah left Jerusalem and went to the king, about eleven years after the wall was finished, there was a falling off of the income of the temple ministers, and after his return to Jerusalem he made strenuous efforts for restoring this income, Neh. 13:6, 10-14. It is clearly supposable, and is in accord with the methods in which he and Ezra had previously operated, that they should arrange for a public gathering in the interest of this reform, and they might naturally, to this end, arrange for a public dedication of the hitherto undedicated wall.

The view thus supposed is the one actually justified by the narrative. This is proved by the double fact that the account in Neh. 12:27-13:3 is continuous with the matter that follows it, and is not continuous with that which precedes it. "Before this," 13:4, in its most natural meaning, is an expression of time, relating to the statements made in the preceding verses. The casting of Tobiah's stuff out of the temple, 13:8, seems to be mentioned as an incident of the separation from the mixed multitude, 13:1, 3. The section 13:9-14 reads like a statement of additional details connected with 12:44. That is to say, the continuity between these events and the dedication of the wall is very distinctly marked. On the other hand, it is sometimes said that in 12:1-26 we have a list of priests and Levites, leading up to the account of the dedication, in which priests and Levites so prominently participated. This would be plausible if the priests and Levites named in the list were those who took part in the dedication, or were their predecessors up to that date. But they are neither; there is only an incidental connection between the names found in the list and those mentioned in the account of the dedication, and the list includes priests who lived later than the dedication, as well as those who lived earlier. The list is in its place if we regard it as a part of the statistical matter appended to the earlier narrative of Nehemiah, but is a misfit if we regard it as the introduction to the account of the dedication. It follows that the account of the second administration of Nehemiah begins with 12:27, while the narrative of his first administration, supplemented by certain additional materials, closes with 12:26.

\* Chisleu is the ninth month, November-December. I assume that by "the twentieth year" the author of Neh. 1:1 means the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, and that he therefore uses the phrase the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, in 2:1 and

444 B.C. At the beginning of the twenty-first of Artaxerxes (Nisan at the close of the twentieth year, Neh. 2:1; 5:14), Nehemiah commissioned. The repairing of the wall begun, fifty-two days before the twenty-fifth of the sixth month (Elul), and completed at that date, Neh. 6:15. In the seventh month, beginning with the first day, the great convocation, the feast of Tabernacles, and the fast of the twenty-fourth day, followed by the sealing and the separation to God, Neh. 8:1-11:2, especially 8:2, 13, 18; 9:1.

433 B.C. 32d of Artaxerxes. Nehemiah returns to the king, 13:6; 5:14.

Later, but not many years later, the beginning of Nehemiah's second administration, and the dedication of the wall, followed by other events, Neh. 12:27 to close of book, especially 13:6.

*A compact account of the events.*—Ezra was a very prominent member of the highpriestly family. He was not high priest, though the author of 1 Esdras evidently thinks of him as performing some at least of the functions of that office, 8:71, 73. He was probably an old man, possibly a very old man, when he came to Jerusalem in 458 B.C.\* He had been a boy in Babylonia when the second temple was dedicated, or possibly earlier. The prominent persons engaged in that enterprise

5:14, to designate the year that began with the new year's day that closed the twentieth of Artaxerxes. Several other conjectures have been made in regard to this, but fortunately nothing important depends upon the differences.

\* A tradition, not thoroughly well authenticated, but not in itself incredible, affirms that Ezra lived to the age of a hundred and twenty years. The latest account of him in the Bible concerns his presence at the dedication of the wall (Neh. 12:36), about 432 B.C. or later, according to the view of the order of events taken in this paper. If Ezra was a hundred and twenty years old about 430 B.C., he was born about 550 B.C., and in his boyhood may have been well acquainted with Daniel. On this supposition, he was more than ninety years old when he came to Jerusalem, the seventh year of Artaxerxes.

He was the son of Seraiah, Ezra 7:1. The genealogy given of this Seraiah shows him to have been the man of that name who was high priest when the temple was burned (2 Kgs. 25:18), and was grandfather to Jeshua, the high priest of Zerubbabel's time, and great-grandfather to Joiakim, who seems to have been high priest when Ezra reached Jerusalem. Joiakim must then have been an old man, and he was soon afterward succeeded by his son Eliashib, Neh. 3:1.

If we accept the theory of Ezra's extraordinary longevity, he may possibly have been directly a son of Seraiah, on the supposition that he was born when Seraiah was old. Quite as likely, however, he was Seraiah's son in the sense of being his descendant, perhaps his great-grandson, of the same generation with Joiakim.

were his relatives. From childhood, probably, his zeal was not less than theirs, but it led him to a different line of work. The ancient sacred writings were accessible, in some shape, in Babylonia, and there was great need that some one should study them, and render them available for the guidance of Israel. Ezra, and probably others with him, gave himself to this work. The character principally ascribed to him is that of "the expert scribe of the law of the God of heaven," Ezra 7:6 et al. A career in sacred scholarship is less conspicuous than the career of a great statesman, but may be not less useful.

I conjecture that Ezra regarded himself as a student, and not a man of affairs. As the decades passed by, he saw with regret that the men of affairs who had charge of the enterprise in Judæa were too much influenced by considerations of selfish interest, or at the best, of public expediency, and too little by the idea of simple obedience to Jehovah's law. He was especially pained by what he heard touching the deficiencies in the temple worship, and the intermingling of Jehovah's people with their Palestinian neighbors. When Mordecai became great, Ezra doubtless hoped for better things in Jerusalem, but was disappointed. After thus waiting till he was an old man for some one else to undertake the desired reforms, he at last felt called upon to undertake them himself. In some respects he was abundantly qualified, however lacking he might be in other respects. He had great abilities and great influence. He was better acquainted than any other man living with the history and the laws of Israel. He knew, both in the whole and in detail, just what he wanted to accomplish, and he was a man of energy and purpose.

He procured ample powers from the Persian government, collected large financial means, and gathered a numerous and influential company of emigrants, including a body of trained temple servants, who might supplement the work of their less expert brethren in Judæa.

Within a few months after his arrival, it became evident that his task was to be a hard and disagreeable one. The evil of foreign marriages had reached such proportions, especially among the priestly families and the prominent citizens, that Ezra regarded a prompt resort to severe means as necessary. The measures he adopted do not seem to have been

tempered by any attempt to alleviate their unavoidable harshness. Using the power with which he was clothed by the Persian sovereign, he compelled, by severe penalties, the gathering of a national assembly, in the inclement weather of the rainy season, at the cost of great discomfort and personal injury to many, Ezra 10:8. At this assembly a special commission was appointed to try the cases of those who had married alien wives. The offenders were required to put away these wives and their children, 10:3, 11, 19. For three months the commission sat, doing its grim work, completing its labors at the close of the first year of Ezra's first administration.

We are not told whether Ezra was divinely guided in all this. Perhaps his course was just and necessary, and therefore really merciful, but it was hard at the time, for those who suffered. We are not surprised that some of its results were uncomfortable. We have no direct information touching the history of Judæa for the next thirteen years, but at the end of that time Ezra was still at Jerusalem (Neh. 8:1-2), the walls of the city had been broken down and the gates burned (Neh. 1:3), the need that priests and people should separate themselves from alien affinities still existed (Neh. 10:28, 30), and certain alien men interested in the mixed marriages were watching the Jews with eager hostility, Neh. 2:19; 4:1; 6:1, 17-19, etc. It is a natural suggestion, though not necessarily a logical inference, that the movement against the alien wives had involved Ezra and his countrymen in difficulties and fighting, in which the relatives of the dishonored women had borne their part, and that disasters had followed.

Then Nehemiah was raised up to help Ezra in his work. Nehemiah is introduced to us as the king's cupbearer, apparently a handsome, graceful young fellow, whom the king liked to have about him. One explanation of the difference between Neh. 1:1 and Neh. 2:1 is that "the twentieth year" in 1:1 means the twentieth year of Nehemiah's life, and not of the king's reign. One should not build too much upon this, but it seems to be a generally accepted conjecture that Nehemiah was then a very young man. He had not, at the outset, Ezra's great learning and influence, but he had certain gifts of leadership. He knew how to do things, and how to interest men in his plans, so as to secure their help. He had worldly wisdom, in the good sense of that term. When he

went up, he did not, like Ezra, call a fast to pray for safety, but he took royal troops with him, Neh. 2:9. Ezra went with an immense caravan; Nehemiah, apparently, with a few personal friends in whom he could confide, 2:12; 5:10; 7:2, etc. Ezra's plans were widely proclaimed, while Nehemiah kept his to himself till they were ready for execution, 2:16, etc. Very likely these differences were in part due to the differences in the circumstances, but they are also characteristic of the two men. The two admirably supplemented one another. Perhaps Nehemiah without Ezra would have succeeded no better than Ezra without Nehemiah; but together they did what neither could have done by himself.

Nehemiah began by getting the Jews who lived in and near Jerusalem to join with him in building the city wall. In spite of external opposition, the work was begun early in the fifth month of the year, and finished the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month. Patriotic feeling was thus aroused that grew as the work advanced. The feeling had become very strong, when, at the cost of great pecuniary sacrifices to themselves, the wealthier Jews, following the example of Nehemiah, consented to remit the debts due them from their less fortunate brethren (Neh. 5); and this itself made the feeling still stronger. A week after the completing of the wall came the great special convocation of the first day of the seventh month, with its magnificent pageant of the public reading of the law, and the people were led to rejoice in Jehovah's law, and in his goodness, even though they saw that the law was still as severe as ever. Two weeks later came the feast of Tabernacles, observed with unprecedented fervor, with its revival of the ancient custom of dwelling in booths, and its continued public reading of the law. This was immediately followed by the fast of the twenty-fourth day of the month. The religious and patriotic fervor had now become so intense and so pervasive that the nation and its leaders were ready with enthusiasm to seal a covenant with Jehovah, in which they accepted his law, including the precepts which Ezra had been so severe in enforcing, and took upon themselves the burdens it required.

No details are given of the remaining eleven years of the first administration of Nehemiah, save those in chapter 5, especially verses 14-18. It is not probable that the outburst

of enthusiasm that marked his first year afterward maintained itself unabated; but from the circumstances, and from the hint in 13:6 as to what happened later, as the result of his absence, we may infer that Nehemiah was able to keep up the reforms that had been begun. There was a strong undercurrent of opposition, however, as was to have been expected. The moment Nehemiah left Jerusalem, the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, to go to the king, the opposition made itself felt. Eliashib, the high priest, was prominent in it. It became at once evident that the reform had not yet attained such a hold that it could maintain itself without the personal presence and influence of Nehemiah.

Two important questions greatly depend on the attaining of as clear a view as possible of the history of this reform. The first is the question as to the law that Ezra and Nehemiah set up in Jerusalem—whether it was really the ancient legislation of the times of Moses and David, or a new body of legislation baptized by ancient names, or some combination of the two. The answer that is given to this question in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah will be the subject of the next paper in this series. The other important question is in regard to literary production among the Jews of this time, and we can best discuss this in connection with the second administration of Nehemiah.